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A NEW CLOUD ATLAS

LUIGI TAFFARA. **Le nubi. Part I; Testo;** 67 pp.; diagrs., ills. **Part II, Atlante** [26 pls.] R. Ufficio Centrale di Meteorol. e Geodinamica, Rome, 1917. 14 x 9½ inches.

That meteorology was far from dead in Italy during the war was clearly demonstrated by the activities of the forecasting service in connection with the military operations of the Italian armies, a matter which was several times referred to in this *Review*. Another indication of the excellent work which has been going on in Italy along meteorological lines is the publication of a new cloud atlas, prepared by Luigi Taffara. The appearance of such a work is sure to attract attention at any time, because of the widespread popular interest in clouds and in their significance as weather prognostics. This interest is, however, especially keen at present, when the development of war flying, and of commercial flying since the war, has directed attention to the study of the free air and especially to the mapping of the upper air currents. The forms and movements of clouds are clearly of the greatest value in determining the directions and velocities of the air currents above the earth's surface which are such critical factors in flight.

In "Le Nubi" the history of cloud classification, and the work of the International Meteorological Committee in connection with cloud classification and observation, are first considered. Then follows a somewhat detailed, and very practical, discussion of cloud photography, in which plates, screens, filters, methods of developing and printing, times of exposure, etc., are considered. Four photographs illustrate the effects of intensifying the original plates. The system of cloud nomenclature suggested by the author, while in its fundamentals following that recommended by the International Cloud Committee, is a far more elaborate one, embodying to a large extent the modifications suggested by Vincent in his "Atlas des nuages" (1907) but including also certain sub-types recommended by others, such, e.g., as the *cirrus filosus* and *cumulus pendulus* of Clayton; *cumulus simplex* and *cumulus compositus* of Weilbach; *cirrus uncinus* of Maze, and other special varieties of the principal forms. Of low clouds there are 25 types; of the intermediate there are 12, 11 of these being varieties of alto-cumulus; and of the upper clouds there are 19. That individual observers who are cloud specialists do need very detailed cloud classifications is obvious; but it is no less clear, as experience has abundantly proved, that for the general run of meteorological observers the world over, a simple and easily learned system of nomenclature, like that adopted by the International Meteorological Committee, is alone practicable. While in no way urging the limitation of the work of such specialists to the simple International scheme, it is the opinion of the present reviewer that nothing more elaborate than the standard international nomenclature is desirable, or possible, for general use. A discussion of methods of observing clouds occupies 30 pages of the text. Nephoscopes of various well-known types are described. An account is given of Marangoni's perspective nephoscope, by means of which the observer, taking observations of two points of the same cloud sheet, can determine the vertical component of cloud motion as well as the horizontal. A method of using a theodolite for making similar observations is described, and, at the end, the theodolite photogram nephoscope of Taffara is illustrated and described.

The "Atlas" includes 26 plates, each plate having two illustrations. Some of these are in colors, two being reproductions of water-color sketches, and one a reproduction of a pastel. The majority of the original photographs were taken by the author and are here seen for the first time. They illustrate every cloud form included by Taffara in his new system of nomenclature. Doubtless most of those who have the opportunity of examining this valuable Atlas will agree in picking out, as unique and most striking pictures, the five photographs of *cumulus simplex* which illustrate the special cloud type designated the *Cortessa del Vento* (Pls. 11, 12, 13). This is a peculiar form of cumulus, in the shape of a helicoidal spiral, which is described (text, p. 15) as often developing to the east of the central crater of Mt. Etna.

R. DE C. WARD